



PROGRESS UPDATE

ABERDEEN CHEMICAL AGENT DISPOSAL FACILITY

(July 2004 update)

WHERE WE ARE

- Since beginning agent operations in April 2003, workers at the Aberdeen Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (ABCDF) have safely drained 450 ton containers of bulk mustard agent and neutralized more than 375 tons of agent, equaling more than 20 percent of the stockpile. We have shipped over one million gallons of mustard agent neutralization byproduct, called hydrolysate, to the DuPont Secure Environmental Treatment facility in Deepwater, N. J., for final treatment as wastewater. The project is on track to complete mustard agent neutralization by this winter, approximately one year ahead of the original, pre-September 11th schedule.
- On July 14, workers at the ABCDF evacuated the facility as a precautionary measure when a nearby lightning strike caused an electrical power outage. Within minutes power was transferred to a back-up generator. Analysis of the facility's chemical agent monitoring system during the brief power outage indicated that low levels of mustard agent vapor were present and contained within the confines of the facility's neutralization bay and adjacent rooms. At no time was any agent vapor detected outside the facility structure. At no time was there a threat to the workers, community or environment.
- After 60 years of storage, the Edgewood Chemical Activity (ECA) reported its first detection of mustard agent on June 23, 2004. A trace amount of agent vapor was detected inside a storage building where mustard agent-filled ton containers are stored. The agent vapor was contained within the storage structure. At no time was there any threat to workers, the community or the environment.

U.S. Army Technical Escort Unit (TEU) personnel located on Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) quickly attached a carbon filter to the structure's ventilation system to contain any agent and sealed the storage structure escape. As a precautionary measure, workers in the Chemical Agent Storage Yard and at ABCDF were temporarily relocated on-post and once officials determined it was safe, they returned to work that day. No additional agent vapor was detected.

TEU workers initiated a detailed operation to locate the source of the leak. This procedure involves isolating the source container by draping heavy industrial plastic sheets over groups of containers and then placing monitors under the plastic to detect the presence of any agent vapor. ECA officials have narrowed down their search to one group of ton containers and say it may take some time to complete the investigation.

"At a glance – ABCDF stats"

(July 2004 Update)



TOTAL DRAINED

450 containers have been drained.



TOTAL NEUTRALIZED

More than 375 tons of mustard agent have been neutralized.



HYDROLYSATE TRANSPORTED

We have shipped 241 truckloads totaling 1,139,895 gallons of the neutralization byproduct, called hydrolysate, to DuPont Secure Environmental Treatment at Chambers Works in Deepwater, N.J., for biotreatment.



WHERE WE'VE BEEN

- Ton container draining operations have proceeded with only minor interruptions since April 28, 2004, when operations resumed following a pause to repair two agent feed pumps that feed agent from the agent holding tank to the neutralization reactors. In addition, project engineers have redesigned the window panels operators see through at each drain station to drain agent from the steel containers. The panels were cracking and required frequent replacement. Since they have been upgraded to newer design standards, cracking has sharply decreased.
- Public meetings on the status of ABCDF operations were held on May 26 and 27 in Edgewood and Chestertown. The ABCDF project manager presented the project's progress to date, and updated attendees on future activities such as the start-up of the Ton Container Cleanout Facility and site closure. Representatives from regulatory agencies and emergency management agencies were on hand to answer questions.

WHERE WE'RE GOING

- **Ton Container Cleanout Facility closer to start-up** – With pre-operational testing complete, engineers are installing a hot water decontamination unit, which will decontaminate small parts removed from the ton containers as they are processed. Start-up testing and operations readiness testing is scheduled for completion in time for ton container processing to begin this fall. The Ton Container Cleanout Facility is a one-of-a-kind pilot plant for cleaning and cutting up ton containers so that they can be sent off site for recycling.
- **Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program Exercise (CSEPP)** – Personnel from APG, ECA and ABCDF will participate in an annual CSEPP exercise with officials from federal, state, and local emergency management agencies. This exercise will test and evaluate the emergency response capabilities and procedures of APG as well as federal, state and local emergency response agencies to an incident involving the chemical agent stockpile. The exercise will be held in Edgewood on Aug. 4, and will simulate a disaster response. Emergency response training by firefighters and hazardous materials specialists occurs continuously.

WHERE WE'LL BE

- **Harford County Farm Fair** – The ABCDF outreach team will staff an information booth at the Harford County Farm Fair from Thursday, July 29 through Sunday, Aug. 1. The booth will have information packets and the outreach staff will be available to answer questions.
- **Kent County's Party on the Bay** – On Aug. 21, the outreach team will be at Kent County's annual Party on the Bay in Rock Hall, Md. The team will have an information booth open from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

EDITOR'S NOTE

- The Spring 2004 issue of ABCDF's quarterly newsletter, *Reach*, will be the final issue. Instead, the outreach team will provide the public with project information on a regular basis through our Progress Updates and Report Card mailers using the *Reach* mailing list. Comments from our readers indicated that the community prefers receiving timelier information in a shorter format. We welcome further comments from our readers on the kind of project news you want to hear about!

For more information, contact the U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office, (410) 676-6800; the Aberdeen Chemical Agent Disposal Facility Public Affairs Office, (410) 436-5253; or the Bechtel Aberdeen Public Outreach Office, (410) 436-9507.